

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there were differences in the prevalence of risk factors for low back pain between two groups of nurses working in different departments of a tertiary care hospital. The study included 100 nurses from the medical-surgical department and 100 nurses from the intensive care unit. Data were collected by means of a questionnaire that assessed demographic characteristics, work-related variables, and psychosocial factors. Results showed that the prevalence of low back pain was higher among nurses in the intensive care unit than among those in the medical-surgical department. The prevalence of risk factors for low back pain was also higher among nurses in the intensive care unit. These findings suggest that interventions aimed at reducing the prevalence of low back pain should focus on addressing the specific risk factors associated with each group of nurses.

Keywords: low back pain, prevalence, risk factors, nurses, intensive care unit, medical-surgical department.

Introduction

Low back pain (LBP) is a common occupational problem for nurses. It is estimated that approximately 8% of nurses experience LBP on a regular basis (Barnard & Smith, 1997). The prevalence of LBP has been found to be higher among nurses in the intensive care unit (ICU) than among those in the medical-surgical department (MSD) (Barnard & Smith, 1997). This may be due to the fact that nurses in the ICU are more likely to perform tasks that involve heavy lifting and prolonged standing, which are known risk factors for LBP.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there were differences in the prevalence of risk factors for LBP between two groups of nurses working in different departments of a tertiary care hospital. The study included 100 nurses from the MSD and 100 nurses from the ICU. Data were collected by means of a questionnaire that assessed demographic characteristics, work-related variables, and psychosocial factors. Results showed that the prevalence of LBP was higher among nurses in the ICU than among those in the MSD. The prevalence of risk factors for LBP was also higher among nurses in the ICU. These findings suggest that interventions aimed at reducing the prevalence of LBP should focus on addressing the specific risk factors associated with each group of nurses.

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